

December 24, 1953

Dear Dean Froker:

As a postscript to our conversation last Monday, I am taking the liberty of sending some of the current applications and enquiries to illustrate my remarks. As you know, the programs of graduate training and research in microbial genetics are closely intertwined. Since the department of Veterinary Science vacated this building, we have had a modicum of floor space that would considerably (if not fully!) alleviate our operating needs. Under present circumstances, I have repeatedly been obliged to discourage applications from students and an equal number of post-doctoral fellows who have sought to work at this University in microbial genetics.

The enclosures are a sample of current enquiries. I know that there would be many more if I had not been obliged during the past several years to discourage them at the source, by not advertising for them in any way, and by explicitly mentioning to my colleagues at other institutions that their promising undergraduates ^{had seen chances} had seen chances. You will note that these applications are directed explicitly to me, or to the program in microbial genetics. Owing to the specialized characters of this hybrid, almost no applications that have been directed to the graduate school or for general studies in genetics or bacteriology have been directed here. This doubtless accounts for the rather high incidence of applications from more mature scholars here and abroad, and from post-doctoral fellowship candidates. In view of the crowded conditions here, this is just as well.

You asked whether I have had to turn away "outstanding" applicants. I have not yet been able to complete an evaluation of the current crop: the point is

whether there is sufficient likelihood of our facilities becoming ready in time for me to be able, in good conscience, to encourage these applications rather than refer them elsewhere. This is a decision that I should not defer beyond about February 1 or 15 at the latest. In the light of your remarks, I shall probably be obliged to write that, since we have no present assurance of adequate space for the 1954-55 session, the applications will have to be returned without regard for their qualifications. Unfortunately, there is no other place in the University to which they can be referred for work in this field.

I am aware that this matter is being considered at appropriate administrative levels and that it is not in your, or even the University's hands alone. If I can add any further information in support of our long-standing request, please let me know of it. I think it will not be disputed that our present set-up offers an opportunity to improve the University's facilities at a cost that is relatively very small in comparison to the amount of space that can thus be made available for efficient utilization. It might be emphasized that it is rather a matter of finishing the construction of a building that has been left for many years in a very rough stage of completion, rather than a mere re-designing requiring the tearing down of existing substantial construction to fit current whims or requirements.

With best wishes for the season and the new year,

Yours cordially,

Joshua Lederberg
Associate Professor of Genetics